

15
*The Nature and Extent of Christ's
Redemption.*

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SERMON

PREACHED before the

GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

OF

VIRGINIA:

At WILLIAMSBURG, November 11th, 1753.

By WILLIAM STITH, A. M.
President of William and Mary College.

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gesses.

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*Abstract from the Journal of the House
of Burgesses.*

Monday, November 12th, 1753.

Ordered,

THAT the Thanks of this House be returned to the Reverend Mr. *William Stith*, for his excellent Sermon, preached Yesterday, before the Council and this House, and that he be desired to print it; and that Mr. *Carter* do wait on him for that Purpose.

John Randolph, C. H. B.

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To the HONOURABLE

Sir George Lyttelton, Bart.

One of the Lords Commissioners of His MA-
JESTY's Treasury, and Member of Parlia-
ment for *Oakhampton*.

S I R,

YOU must not be surpris'd at an
Address of this Nature, from
so distant a Part of the *British* Domi-
nions, as *Virginia*. Your Reputation,
as a Patriot, and a Man of Sense,
Learning, Probity, and Honour, hath
been long well known to us, as well
from your Writings, as from your long
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DEDICATION.

upright and unblemished Conduct in Parliament. And if that had been wanting, yet your Fame, as *the noblest Work of God, an honest Man*, hath been wafted to us on the Wings of Poetry, and is rendered sacred to all Ages, and through all Regions, in the Works of your late great and immortal Friend, Mr. POPE.

BUT however beautiful your Character may appear in these Points of View, yet it was not even that, which drew upon you this Dedication. It is to the Christian, and the Man of Piety and Religion, that this Address is directed; to the Author of the *Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul*; one of the neatest, clearest, and most convincing Defences of the Christian Religion, that our Age hath produced; altho' our Age hath

DEDICATION.

hath produced not a few excellent Pieces of the like Kind.

AS the following Discourse was written with the same Spirit and Intent of clearing up the Christian Verity, and of wiping off from the Gospel the Stain of Cruelty and Injustice, cast upon it by the Rashness and Violence of Men, who *know not, what Manner of Spirit they are of*; so, when it was ordered to be printed, I could not think of any Person, to whom it could be addressed with greater Propriety, than yourself. For however short it may be of your Piece, in the Strength of Reasoning, and Elegancy of Composition; yet I will venture to hope, that it was written with as honest a Design, and with as sincere and genuine a Love of Truth and the Gospel.

DEDICATION.

I hope, Sir, you will excuse this Boldness and Intrusion in a Stranger; who is wholly unknown to you farther, than that I remember you, as a Contemporary at *Oxford*, and that I have been transiently in your Company there; altho' it is very probable, you may have quite forgotten me. I am, with all due Regard to your Dignity and Figure in the Nation, but with a much greater Respect and Esteem for your personal Merit and Virtue,

S I R,

Your Most Humble, and

Most Obedient Servant,

William Stith.



T H E

P R E F A C E.

THERE is one Thing, which I think it proper to advertise the Reader of. When I had almost finished this Sermon, I had Occasion to turn to, and re-examine, Monsieur Limborch's Letter to Mr. Locke, which I have quoted; and I found, that Letter had Reference to Mr. Locke's Treatise of The Reasonableness of Christianity, as delivered in the Scriptures. Altho' I am a great Admirer of Mr. Locke's Writings, and have been no in- studious Reader of them, yet I never had to my Knowledge read that Tract; being deterred from it, I believe, by the long Roll of Controversy with Edwards, tagged to the End of it; a Kind of Reading, which even Mr. Locke's Genius could not sanctify, or render promising and pleasant to me. However having conceived Hopes of getting some new Light in my Subject from that Piece, I stopped my Pen and ceased Writing, 'till I had read it over. But how great was my Pleasure and Surprise, to find most of the nice and hazardous Truths, which I have deduced under the third Head of this Discourse, displayed with still greater Evidence and Beauty.

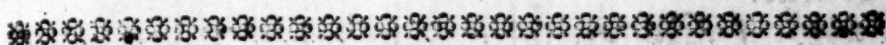
by that admirable Writer, with many others, which I have left untouched? So that, had I read that Treatise before, I dare say, I should never have written that third Head of Discourse, concerning the Salvation of the Gentiles; knowing it to have been so much better treated by that masterly Hand.

WE have indeed, in some Points, trod so exactly in the same Tract, that it will not be easily believed, that I have not borrowed from him. But I declare, to the best of my Remembrance, that I had never read that Discourse before. If I had ever read it, it must have been four or five and twenty Years ago, when I was at the University; and thus it is possible, his Notions may have so incorporated with my own Thoughts, that I cannot now distinguish the one from the other. But I am rather apt to think, that we have both hit on the same Truths by the same Means; viz. by a free, couragious, and honest use of our Reason, assisted and improved by a diligent Study and Search into sacred Scripture.



A

S E R M O N.



St. MATTHEW, vii. 13, 14.

Enter ye in at the strait Gate, for wide is the Gate, and broad is the Way that leadeth to Destruction, and many there be which go in thereat : Because strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way, which leadeth unto Life, and few there be, that find it.

THESE Words, at first View, seem to carry a terrible Aspect, and to declare, that the greatest Part of Mankind will miss their Way to eternal Life, and perish everlastingly. And accordingly we find them so understood by some Persons ; and particularly a late Author from our Press says : “ Is it not certain, that the most of Mankind perish ? And to hope the contrary, however natural it is to a generous Soul, is blasphemously to hope, that God will be a Liar.” * This violent Denunciation against the greatest Part of Mankind is founded, I presume, upon this, and some other parallel Texts of Scripture. But however cautious I would be, of incurring the horrid Crime of Blasphemy, yet I must confess myself to be one of those

* This is said in a Pamphlet, intituled, *The impartial Trial, impartially tried. and convicted of Partiality.* P. 47.

those *generous Souls*, who not only *hope*, but firmly believe better things. And I have therefore chosen this Portion of Scripture, for the Subject of my present Discourse; in the Prosecution of which I shall endeavour

I. TO settle and ascertain the Sense of these Words.

II. I shall consider some other Texts, which are thought to have the same Meaning, and to include the like dreadful Sentence against the greatest Part of Mankind.

III. AND lastly, I shall shew the Universality of CHRIST's Redemption;—that *he is the Propitiation for our Sins, and not for our Sins only, but also for the Sins of the whole World.* 1 John ii. 2.

I. I am to settle and ascertain the Sense of these Words. And to this Purpose it must be remembered, that but few of the Jews of that Age came in to Christ, and embraced the Gospel. And this was an Event, that was often foretold by the Prophets of the Old Testament, that only a *Remnant should be saved*. It is true indeed, that when the Prophets speak of this *Remnant*, their first and immediate Meaning respected the small Remainder of the Jewish Nation, which was to return from the Babylonian Captivity, and to settle in *Judea*, and again to become a Nation. But altho' this was their primary and immediate Meaning, yet we are not to restrain it wholly to this Sense. For with an Address, usual to the Prophecies of the Old Testament, it had a farther prophetic Glance at the Times of the Gospel; and signified, that a small Part only of the Jewish Nation should receive the MESSIAH, when he came, and accept those gracious Terms of Salvation

vation, which God, in his infinite Wisdom and Goodness, hath appointed.

I am sensible, how dangerous it is, to give into whimsical and distant Interpretations of the Scriptures; yet think myself obliged to submit to any such Application of them, as is made or authorised by the inspired Writers. And I think, we are plainly led to this Allusion and Sense by St. Paul, in the xi. Chapt. of his Epistle to the *Romans*. He is there treating of God's Rejection of the Jews, which he denies to be total, and instances in himself who was not only a Christian, but an Apostle. And then having alluded to *the seven thousand Men in Israel, in the Days of Elias, whom God had reserved to himself, and who had not bowed the Knee to Baal*, he adds: *Even so then, at this present Time also, there is a REMNANT according to the Election of Grace.* Rom. xi. 5. where the Apostle plainly refers to the *Remnant to be saved*, so often mentioned by the Prophets of the Old Testament; as indeed Dr. Hammond, and other Commentators, observe.

AND now, since the Jews were such a perverse and stiff-necked Generation, and so obstinately set against Christ and the Gospel; and since this was so remarkable and eminent an Event, that it was often hinted, or even plainly foretold, by their ancient Prophets; our Blessed SAVIOUR, in the Words of my Text, advises his Auditors to avoid the sinful and pernicious Conduct of the Generality of their Countrymen;—*not to enter in at the wide Gate, nor travel in the broad Way of their national Prejudices, in expecting worldly Advantages and a glorious temporal MESSIAH, and rejecting the lowly Jesus: Because strait was the Gate of the Gospel,*

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*and narrow the way * through the thorny Paths of Affliction and Persecution, that led unto Life, and few (Jews) there were, that would find it. So that (according to this Interpretation, and the Sense, which I have always had of these Words ever since my first studying or knowing any thing of the Scriptures) they are to be understood of the Jews of that Age, and not to be extended to all Christians, or to Mankind in general.*

AND this Sense and Interpretation will be still more evident, if we consider and collate with it the parallel Passage in St. Luke; where the Occasion is more particularly related, and the Application to the Jews more express and indubitable. The Words are: *Then said one unto him; Lord, are there few, that be saved? And he said unto them: Strive to enter in at the strait Gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the Master of the House is risen up, and hath shut to the Door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the Door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not, whence you are: Then shall ye begin to say; we have eaten and drunk in thy Presence, and thou hast taught in our Streets. (Which Circumstances did certainly only agree with the Jews of that Time, and can by no means be applied to all Christians throughout all Ages.) But he shall say; I tell you, I know you not, whence you are; depart from me, all ye Workers of Iniquity. There shall be Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth, when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob, (the grand Patriarchs of the Jewish Nation) and all the*

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ὁ δὲ Στῆνῃ πύλῃν λέγει τὰς πειρασμὰς τὰς τε ἰκνοίας, οἷον νηστείας καὶ τάλαντα καὶ τὰς ἀκροίας, οἷον δεισμὰ, διωγμούς. Theophyl.

*Prophets, in the Kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the East, and from the West, and from the North, and from the South, *and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God. Luke xiii.*

23.-29. And now, in this parallel Passage, the Metaphor in my Text,—*the entering in at the strait Gate, and that many should seek to enter in and should not be able,*——is so clearly and so undeniably applyed to the Jewish Nation, that I shall not spend my Breath, or waste your Time and Patience, in proving so clear a Point;——so clear indeed, that *Theophylact, Grotius*, and all the Commentators, that I am acquainted with, are unanimously agreed in it.

NEITHER is it a sufficient Objection to this Interpretation, that the Words of my Text are found in our SAVIOUR'S Sermon on the Mount, which was designed to give a general Sketch of Christian Morals, for universal Instruction and Improvement, and without Respect to the Jews or any other particular Cases. For altho' such may be the general Nature and Tendency of that Divine Discourse, yet are we not wholly to exclude from it all Precepts adapted to particular Cases. For to instance only in that famous Precept in the foregoing Chapter of this Gospel: *I say unto you; Take no Thought for your Life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your Body, what ye shall put on.* And so he goes on, proposing to Imitation the Thoughtlessness and Improvidence of the *Fowls of the Air, which neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into Barns*, and yet are plentifully provided for and fed by our Heavenly Father. Nay, he even

draws

i. e. The Gentiles shall come from all Parts of the Earth, and be gathered to the Gospel.

draws an Example from senseless and inanimate Things,——from *the Lilies of the Field, which neither toil, nor spin, and yet even Solomon in all his Glory was not arrayed like one of these.*——Even this famous Precept, I say, was particular, and peculiarly adapted to that Age and Time. For by the Apostles and first Propagators of the Christian Religion, it was to be taken in it's strictest and most literal Meaning. They were sent forth to preach the Gospel to all Nations, and were under a particular Providence of God, and the immediate Direction of his Holy Spirit; —and therefore ought to be entirely free from all worldly Care and Solitude, and wholly intent and taken up with the grand Business, they went upon. They ought not to have had any manner of Thought about *what they should eat, or what they should drink, or where-withal they should be cloathed;* —but to leave all such things to the Care of that Master, whose Errand they were upon; and who well knew, they had need of those things, and was well able to provide for them.

FOR them therefore, and for them only, —for the Apostles and first Propagators of the Christian Doctrine, —was this Precept immediately designed in it's strict and literal Meaning. But with Relation to Christians in general, it must of necessity be taken in a laxer and more extensive Sense; so as not to exclude a moderate Concern and Endeavour to provide for ourselves and Families, together with an honest Industry and prudent Management, and all the other ordinary Means of Living. For these are the Terms, upon which God hath granted us the Necessaries and Conveniences of Life; and to comply

ply with them is so far from being sinful, that it is in truth only to comply with the Dictate and Disposition of Divine Providence. But to make this Precept equally obligatory, in it's strict Signification, upon all Christians, and in all Ages, would be of very bad and ruinous Consequence to Mankind. There were indeed Men enough intent upon the Affairs of Life, to support the Apostles and first Propagators of Christianity; and their Labours were not missed in the general Provision of the World. But if this Precept was to be taken universally in it's literal Sense; what would become of Mankind? who would sow? who would reap?—and who would gather into Barns the Staff of human Life, and make the necessary Provision for the World's Subsistence?

AS therefore this Precept is by the very Nature of the Thing limited, and adapted in its strict Meaning to the Apostles and first Preachers of the Gospel; so likewise have the Words of my Text their particular Sense, and are immediately designed for that perverse and murderous Race, the Jews of that Age. Altho' in a wider Signification, they may be understood excellently to express the Straitness and Difficulty of entering upon a Christian Course of Life; that it is very easy and natural for Men to fall into the broad Way of Vice; and that Multitudes, alas! but too many, travel down it into the very Gate of Hell and Destruction.—But I now proceed

II. TO consider some other Texts of Scripture, which are thought to have the same Meaning, and to include the like dreadful Sentence against the greatest Part of Mankind.

AND

AND among these, there are none more eminent or more liable to be mistaken, than those Places, where it is said; *That many are called, but few are chosen.* Matt. xx. 16. xxii 14. These Words some fiery Zealots eagerly lay hold of, and without Mercy, or the least Hesitation, condemn the Bulk of their Fellow-Christians to eternal Perdition. But this is a Point of much easier Discussion than the Words of my Text. For in expounding them I had no former human Guide, but was wholly led by the Light of Scripture and my own Reason; but here we have the plain Tract of the Commentators to follow, who all agree, that these Words relate to the Jews of that Age: But for the fuller Understanding of this Matter, it will be necessary to consider and explain the foregoing Parables to which these Words are a Kind of Inference. I shall therefore endeavour to give an Exposition of the Parable of the Marriage-Feast, in the xxii. Chapt. of St. Matthew's Gospel; in which I shall chiefly follow two excellent Interpreters of Scripture, *Theophylact* among the Greeks, and Dr. *Whitby* of our Church.*

2. † *THE Kingdom of Heaven, (i. e. the State and Success of the Gospel) is like unto a certain King, which made a Marriage for his Son.* Where by the King is meant ‡ Almighty God; by the || Son, CHRIST JESUS; and by the Marriage, the

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* The same Sense of this Parable is likewise gathered from various Authors, by that diligent and laborious Compiler, Mr. *Poole*, *Synops. Critic. in loc.*

† Καὶ αὕτη ἡ παραβολὴ τῆς τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἀπειθείας ὑποσημαίνει ὥστε ἡ τῶ ἀμπελῶν. Vid. Cap. xx. 1-16. *Theophyl.*

‡ Ἀνθρώπων ἐν βασιλείᾳ ὁμοῖται ὁ Θεός Id.

|| Ποῦ δὲ γάμον τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ, συνάπλων αὐτὸν πάσῃ ψυχῇ ἀγαθῇ. Νυμφίος γὰρ ὁ Χριστός, νύμφη δὲ ἡ ἐκκλησία καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ. Id.

Promulgation of the Gospel ; or in Scripture Phrase, CHRIST's Marriage with his Spouse the Church.

3. *AND sent forth his * Servants* (i. e. he sent the Apostles and the Seventy, Chap. x.) *to call them that were bidden, to the Wedding,* (i. e. to call the Jews, who were instructed and invited to the Gospel, by the Prophecies and Scriptures of the Old Testament. Accordingly we find the Apostles and Seventy commanded by CHRIST, *not to go into the Way of the Gentiles, nor to any City of the Samaritans, but to the lost Sheep of the House of Israel.* Matt. x. 5. 6.) *and they would not come.*

4. *AGAIN he sent forth other † Servants;* (meaning after his Ascension, he sent forth the Apostles and others, which were fitted by the Descent of the Holy GHOST, Acts ii.) *saying tell them, which are bidden; Behold I have prepared my Dinner: my Oxen and my Fatlings are killed, come unto the Marriage.* For now it was high Time; the Lamb of God was slain, the Dinner was ready, and all things waited for the Jews to come to the Feast of the Gospel.

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5. BUT

* The Ancients, following Origen, interpret this of Moses and the Prophets. But *the Dinner's being prepared, and the Marriage's being now ready* (v. 4. 8.) will not permit us to understand these Servants to be the ancient Prophets; but the Vehemence and Urgency of the Invitation, as to a Thing now present, plainly point out and affix the Meaning to the Apostles, and first Preachers of the Gospel.

† These the Ancients interpret to be the Apostles, and first Propagators of the Gospel.

2. *BUT* they made light of it, and went their Ways, one to his * Farm, another to his † Merchandise. (i. e.) Some of the Jews slighted the Gospel, and were drawn away by worldly Considerations, by the Pursuit of the various Interests and Pleasures of this Life.

6. *And the Remnant took his Servants and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.* But others acted more roundly and maliciously : They not only slighted God's gracious Invitations to the Gospel, but despitefully used and slew his Apostles and Teachers.

7. *BUT* when the King heard thereof, he was wroth ; and sent forth his || Armies (the Roman Armies under *Vespasian* and *Titus*) and destroyed those Murderers, and burnt up their City.

8. *THEN* saith he to his Servants ; The Wedding is ready (i. e. the Times of the Gospel are come) but they which were bidden (the Jews) were not worthy.

9. *GO* ye therefore into the † Highways (i. e. to the Gentiles) and as many as ye shall find, bid to the Marriage ; Call all promiscuously into the Gospel, without Distinction of Persons or Nations.

10. *SO* those Servants went out into the Highways, and gathered together all, as many as they found, both

* Εἰς τὸν ἴδιον ἀγρὸν, τελέειν, εἰς φιλόσαρκον βίον καὶ τρυφίαν. *Theophyl.*

† Εἰς τὴν ἐμπορίαν αὐτοῦ, τελέειν, εἰς τὸν φιλονεικῶν βίον· οἱ γὰρ ἔμποροι, φιλονεικεῖσθαι γίνονται. *Theophyl.*

|| Τὰ γεγενημένα αὐτοῦ, τελείει, τὰ Ῥωμαῖκα· καὶ τὸς ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἀπέλκει, καὶ τὴν πόλιν αὐτῶν ἐνέπρησι τὴν Ἰερουσαλήμ, ὡς ὁ φιλαλήτης Ἰωσήφ λέγει. *Id.*

† Ἄλλως δέ τις ἀποσέλλει, τὸς Ἀποστόλους, οἱ τὸς ἐξ ἐθνῶν ἐκάλεισαν. *Id.*

both bad and good: and the Wedding was furnished with Guests.

11. *AND* when the King came in to see the Guests (at the last Day, when God shall make Enquiry into our Lives and Conversations) he saw there a Man, which had not on a † Wedding Garment. (i. e.) whose Faith and Conversation were not such, as suited the Gospel.

12. *AND* he saith unto him; Friend, how camest thou in hither (what Pretensions have you to a Place in Heaven?) not having on a Wedding Garment? And he was Speechless.

13. *THEN* said the King to the Servants; Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer Darknes (i. e. into Hell) There shall be Weeping and * Gnasping of Teeth: There shall they be in exquisite Torment, and in vain repent, and be vexed, and grieve, for their Folly and Ingratitude, in rejecting the Feast of the Gospel.

14. *FOR* † many (Jews) are called (and invited to the Gospel) but few (of them) are chosen (and will accept God's gracious Offer)

AND now, according to this plain, and in my Opinion, this true and indisputable Sense of the Parable, it is evident, that these Words do no ways relate to Christians throughout all Ages, but were immediately aimed at the Jews, for their Wicked-

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† Ἐν μὴ ἔχοι τις βίον καθαρόν, ἔδεν αὐτὸν ἀφελῆν ἢ πῶς. Οὐ γὰρ μόνον ἐκβάλλεται ἐκ τοῦ γάμου, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰς τὸ πῦρ ἐκπέμπεται. Theophyl.

* Βρυγμός δὲ ὁδόντων, ἢ τότε γενησομένη ἀνοήτως μεταμέλεια. Id.

† Πάλιν γὰρ καλεῖ ὁ Θεός, μᾶλλον δὲ πάντας ὀλίγοι δὲ οἱ σωζόμενοι καὶ ἄξιοι τοῦ ἐκλεγῆναι παρὰ Θεοῦ. ὥστε τὸ μὲν Θεῷ, τὸ καλεῖν τὸ δὲ ἐκλεκτὸς γενέσθαι ἢ μὴ, ἡμετέροις ἐστὶ. Δείκνυσιν τούτων, ὅτι διὰ τὰς Ἰουδαίας ἐλέχθη ἡ παραβολή, δι' ἐκλήθησαν μὲν, ὡς ἐκλέχθησαν δὲ, ὡς μὴ ἐκλεχθῆναι. Id.

ness and Perverseness in rejecting Christ and the Gospel. And it would be very easy, to expound the other Parable, in the xx Chapt. of this Gospel, concerning the Householder hiring Labourers into his Vineyard in the same Sense and Manner; and to shew, that these Words, (*many are called, but few are chosen*) which are likewise used as an Inference to that Parable, are no ways designed against Christians or Mankind in general, but do solely respect the Jews of that Age. But this would perhaps be more tedious than necessary; and I hope, that what hath been said will be sufficient to vindicate these Texts from the Perversion of rash and violent Men, who are continually brandishing the Firebrands of Hell against all, they dislike; and who, if *they have a Zeal of God*, yet certainly *it is not according to Knowledge*.

AND as these Expressions were designed for the Jews, as Threats and Warnings to them, so we may observe, that they are only to be found in St. *Matthew's* Gospel; which was written for the Use of the Jews, and originally in Hebrew, altho' no authentic Copy of it is now extant in that Language. But it was translated very early into Greek (the Language at that Time universally used and understood through the Roman Empire) by some sure, if not inspired, Hand. For if we may credit the Tradition in † *Theophylact*, it was done by St. *John*, the Evangelist. And altho' there is one parallel Passage in St. *Luke* to the Words of my Text; yet there the Occasion and Application to the Jews is so plain, as not easily to be mistaken.

BUT

† *Prem. in Evangelij*

BUT it will perhaps be said, that this doth not yet
 salve the Matter, or clearly vindicate God's Justice
 and Mercy. He hath created a Set of poor Creatures,
 to crawl upon the Face of this Earth, and con-
 tinually to conflict with the Miseries and Troubles
 of this Life; and after that is ended,—all of them,
 except a very few choice Saints,—will be consigned
 to everlasting Torments in the Life to come. And
 all this, with God's certain Foreknowledge, and
 premeditated Design;—nay (to put the finishing
 Hand to the Horror of the Picture) by his own ab-
 solute and irreversible Decrees from all Eternity.
 Such is the amiable Light, in which some Men
 paint to us *the Father of Mercies and God of all Comfort*.
 And this is the more confidently insisted upon, be-
 cause the greatest Part and Bulk of Mankind,
 through all Ages, have been Heathens; and these
 they conclude to be all to a Man *turned into Hell*,
 and damned without Dispute and without Rever-
 sion.—Wherefore to clear up the Truth in this
 Matter, or at least to propose my honest and sincere,
 tho' perhaps simple, Opinion about it; I proceed,

III. AND lastly to shew the Universality of
 CHRIST's Redemption, that he is *the Propitiation*
for our Sins, and not for our Sins only, but also for
the Sins of the whole World. 1 John ii. 2. And for
 the clearer and more distinct Explication of this
 Subject, I shall observe

I. That there is no Remission of Sin, or Sal-
 vation, but by the Merits and Sufferings of our
 Lord JESUS CHRIST. He is *the Lamb of God,*
which taketh away the Sin of the World; (John i. 29)
who not by the Blood of Goats and Calves, but by
his own Blood, entered in once into the holy Place,

having obtained eternal Redemption for us. Heb. ix. 12. It is by his propitiatory Sacrifice, offered once for all, and by the Satisfaction thereby made to God's Justice (in a Manner, and upon Reasons, incomprehensible to our weak Sense and Understanding) that we can have any Access to the Throne of Grace, or Inheritance among the Saints in Light. He is therefore emphatically stiled by the Prophet, The Lord, our Righteousness. Jer. xxiii. 6. For with his Stripes we are healed, and by his imputed Righteousness we are justified and accepted in the Sight of God. Neither is there Salvation in any other: For there is none other Name under Heaven, given among Men, whereby we must be saved. Acts iv. 12.

2. AS we are thus, by CHRIST's Merits and Satisfaction, put into a Capacity of Salvation, so is Faith required on our Part, as an indispensable Condition for entering into the Kingdom of Heaven: An indispensable Condition, I mean, to those, who have the Christian Faith offered unto them, or who have the Opportunity to know and embrace the Gospel. *For by Grace are we saved, through Faith. Eph. ii. 8. So must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal Life. John iii. 14. 15. He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting Life: And he, that believeth not the Son, shall not see Life; but the Wrath of God abideth on him. Ibid. v 36.*

ALL therefore, to whom the Knowledge of the Gospel shall come, are obliged, at the Hazard of their eternal Salvation, to receive and believe it. — However, God is not so rigorous, as to expect more from Men, than is given to them; and therefore,

3. FROM

3. FROM those, who had only a confused Notion of the thing, and no distinct Perception of the Gospel Truths, and Terms of Salvation in CHRIST JESUS, there was not required a full and explicate Faith in all the Articles of the Christian Religion; but in them, a firm Trust in God's Promises, and a general Belief in a MESSIAH to come, were sufficient to Salvation. And such was the Case of *Abel* and *Noah*, of *Abraham* and the *Patriarchs*, of *Moses* and the *Prophets*, and in short of all holy and pious Persons under the Jewish Dispensation. They were all certainly saved by the Death and Merit of JESUS CHRIST; and yet it is as certain, that they had very imperfect Ideas of that Death and Merit, and of the Nature of that Salvation. Their Eye never saw, neither did it enter into their Hearts to conceive, that the eternal Son of the Father, *who is over all God blessed for ever*, Rom. ix. 5. should take upon himself our Nature, and therein *die for our Sins, and rise again for our Justification*. Of these, I say, and other, the grand and constituent Truths of that great Mystery of Salvation, they had a very dark and imperfect Knowledge; or indeed, of the greatest Part, perhaps no Notion at all. And yet, I believe, it is universally allowed that these Men were saved; — and saved by that very CHRIST, of whose Nature and Office they had so faint and glimmering an Idea. *Many Prophets and Kings* (saith our SAVIOUR) *desired to see the things, which ye see, and did not see them, and to hear the things, which ye hear, and did not hear them*. Luke x. 24. For however diligently the Prophets might enquire and search into that mighty Salvation, which CHRIST hath wrought for us, *which things the very Angels desire*

desire to look into (1 Pet. i. 10. 12) yet it is certain, that they only *had a Shadow of good things to come, and not the very Image of the things* (Heb. x. 1)—only a Glimpse and imperfect Sketch of CHRIST's Redemption, and not a full View and complete Knowledge of it. And accordingly God was content with their acting and believing according to that Proportion of Light, which he had vouchsafed to give them.

BUT as God was not severe, to require of the holy Men under the Old Testament a full and explicate Belief of all the Articles and Mysteries of the Christian Faith, so

4. NEITHER will he demand from the Poor and Ignorant under the Gospel, a particular and explicate Belief of all those Articles of Faith, whose Signification and Meaning it exceeds their Capacity to understand. As there are Different Degrees in Men's Opportunities and Understandings, so will there likewise be different Degrees in the things required of them; and in Acts of Faith, as well as in Works of Charity, *if there be first a willing Mind, it will be accepted according to that a Man hath, and not according to that he hath not.* 2 Cor. viii. 12.—And as these are the plain Dictates of natural Justice, so

5. IT seems equally unreasonable to think, that God will condemn to eternal Perdition, for the Want of Faith, those honest and virtuous Heathens, who, as far as human Frailty would permit, acted sincerely and conscientiously, according to the best of their Knowledge and Understanding, and whose Misfortune only it was to be ignorant of both the *Mosaical* and *Christian Covenants*.

IT

IT is shocking to right Reason, and contradictory to the first Principles of common Sense, that Men should be held to Impossibilities. But as *to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required* (Luke xii. 48) so is it equally a Dictate of natural Equity, that *to whomsoever little is given, of him can only little be required*. God is not so austere and cruel a Task-master, as to exact the full Tale of Bricks without the proper Allowance of Straw : He will never condemn the Heathen for Want of Faith, in those things, which they neither knew, nor could know, without an express Revelation. On the contrary, he is a Being of infinite Truth and Justice, and will not damn any Man for what is not his own Fault. Nay, it is to be presumed, that whosoever hath the Unhappiness to be condemned at the last Day, their Guilt will be so clear and so undeniable, that they will not be able to open their Mouth against the Justice of the Sentence ; *but God will be justified in his Saying ; and clear, when he judgeth*. Ps. li. 4.

AND the Justness of this Reasoning seems plainly allowed by St. Paul, who says : *How shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed ? and how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard ? and how shall they hear without a Preacher ? and how shall they preach, except they be sent ?* Rom. x. 14. 15. Which was exactly the Case, I am now mentioning. No Prophet was sent to the Gentiles, *neither had the Heathen Knowledge of God's revealed Laws ;* and consequently they could lye under no Obligation, arising solely from them. How could such a Man as *Socrates*, or as *Confucius*, the Chinese (who, by their Story, may be esteemed among the best

best mere Men of unassisted Reason, that ever lived)—but how could they, I say, know (at least *without a Preacher*) that Salvation was to be obtained only among the Jews, an obscure and despised Nation in their Days, and so remote, especially from *Confucius*, that it is not probable, that he ever so much as heard of them?

AND agreeable to this is the express Doctrine of *St. Paul*, in the ii. Chapter of his Epistle to the *Romans*; where he clearly determines, that the Gentiles shall not be judged, at the last Day, by any revealed Law, but shall stand or fall, shall be received to eternal *Glory and Peace*, or delivered over to everlasting *Tribulation and Anguish*, according as they have acted up to the Law of Nature. But hear the Wisdom, Equity, and good Sense of the Divine Oracles themselves. *God will render to every Man according to his Deeds. x. 6.*—— *Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish, upon every Soul of Man, that doth Evil, of the Jew first, and also of the * Gentile. But Glory, Honour, and Peace to every Man, that worketh Good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile. For there is no Respect of Persons with God. For as many, as have sinned † without Law (i. e. without the Knowledge of any revealed Law) shall also perish without (Respect to that) Law: and as many as have sinned in the (Light of the*

* Ἑλλῆνες δὲ τὸν καλεῖ, ὃ τὰς τῷ θεῷ κηρύγματι προσειληλυθότας ἀλλὰ τὰς πρὸς τῆς θείας ἐνανθρωπήσεως γενομένας. *Theodor.*

† Τὰς μὲν Ἰουδαίους κατὰ τοῦ Μωσάϊκου νόμου εὐθύνας εἰσπράξειαι. τὰς δὲ γε τέτον ὃ δεξαμένους (τέτοντες γὰρ ἀνόμως καλεῖ) εἴτα ἡμαρτηκότας, κατὰ τὴν ἐνθεῖσαν τῇ φύσει διάγνωσιν ἐνδίκως καταλείψει. *Theod.* Οἱ μὲν Ἕλληνες ἀνόμως ἡμαρτον, τελέει, χωρὶς τῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου κατηχέσεως. Ὁ δὲ Ἰουδαῖος ἐνόμως ἡμαρτησεν, ὃ ἐστὶν, μετὰ τῆς τοῦ νόμου κατηχέσεως. *Theophyl.*

the revealed) Law shall be judged by the (revealed) Law—— In the Day, when God shall judge the Secrets of Men by JESUS CHRIST, according to my Gospel. Rom. ii. 9. &c. For when the Gentiles, which have not the (revealed) Law, do by Nature the things contained in the (written) Law, these having not the (revealed) Law, are † a Law unto themselves. Which * shew the Work of the Law, written in their Hearts; their Conscience also bearing Witness, and their Thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another. ver. 15.

AND here the Apostle's Doctrine is so clear and express, that we find the Generality of Expositors; ancient and modern, are agreed, that according to this, *Melchisedeck*, *Job*, *Jethro*, the *Ninevites*, and some other Heathens, were saved. But they seem very cautious, how they admit through this Gap the Rabble of *Greeks* and *Romans*, and other good and virtuous Heathens: As if they had a particular Pique and Exception against *St. Paul's* Word *Ἕλληες*, used here ver. 9, 10; and because the *Greeks* are expressly mentioned for the *Gentiles* in general, they are therefore to be particularly excluded from the Terms of Salvation, here declared upon their acting up sincerely and conscientiously to the Law of Nature.

But if it be asked, how the *Gentiles* are saved? the Answer is only in general, that they are saved by the Death and Mediation of JESUS CHRIST. Neither

† Οἱ πρὸ τοῦ Μωσάικου νόμου ἐγείβησι μὲν χρῆσάμενοι λογισμοῖς, ἡρώεσι δὲ ἀσφατῆς τὸν βίον κατακοσμήσαντες, καὶ σφῶν αὐτῶν νομοδοῦναι γινόμενοι. *Theod.*

* Ἐδείξε τὸν τῆς φύσεως νόμον ταῖς καρδίαις ἐγγεγραμμένον. *Theod.*
Τρεῖς νόμους ἐνῆλθα φησὶ τὸν γραπτὸν, τὸν φυσικὸν, καὶ τὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις. *Theophyl.*

ther do I know a better Account of this Matter, than what is given by a very eminent, judicious, and learned Protestant Divine, *Philippus a Limborch*. In a Letter to Mr. *Locke*, he says * : “ That the Fruit of CHRIST’s Sacerdotal Office is, that the World is reconciled to God; so that now, through CHRIST, all Men of all Kinds, Ages, and Nations (*omnibus omnino hominibus*) have a Remedy against that Misery into which they fell, by Occasion of *Adam*’s Sin, and through their own actual Transgressions, and an Opportunity given them of attaining eternal Salvation. And from hence he thinks, a rational Account may be given, how those, who have never so much as heard of CHRIST, may yet be saved through CHRIST. If, by the Light of Nature they sincerely repent them of their Sins, and humbly ask Pardon for them, and fly to God’s Favour

“ and

* Quid si hic addatur muneris sacerdotalis fructus; quod mundus Deo sit reconciliatus; adeo ut nunc per Christum omnibus omnino hominibus remedium paratum sit e miseria sua (in quam occasione peccati *Adami* propriisque peccatis inciderunt) emergendi, et salutem æternam consequendi. Hoc posito, puto explicari posse, qua ratione illi, qui de Christo ne fando quidem audiverunt, per Christum salvari possint. Nempe quod Deus illis (qui instinctu luminis Naturæ ad gratiam et misericordiam ejus confugiunt, delictorumque resipiscentiam agunt, eorumque veniam supplices petunt) gratiam per Christum impetratam applicet, ipsisque propter Christum remissionem peccatorum et justitiam imputet. Atque ita beneficium, quod ubi Christus prædicatus est, non nisi per directam in Christum fidem obtineri potest, illi sine directa in Christum, ipsis non prædicatum, fide consequantur per gratiosam imputationem divinam; qui favores et beneficia sua, latius extendere potest, quam promissorum verba ferunt. Ut ita omnium salus in sacrificio Christi propitiatorio fundetur. *Limborch* apud *Locke*, Vol. 3d. P. 621. Edit. Parker, 1727.

“ and Mercy, that then God will apply to them
 “ the Grace obtained by CHRIST, for his Sake will
 “ impute Righteousness to them, and grant them
 “ Remission of Sins. And thus the Gentiles,
 “ by God’s gracious Imputation, and without a
 “ direct Faith in CHRIST, who was never preached
 “ to them, will obtain that Benefit, which cannot
 “ be obtained, where CHRIST hath been preached,
 “ otherwise than by a direct Faith in him. So that
 “ the Salvation of all Mankind is founded in
 “ CHRIST’s propitiatory Sacrifice. Neither is God
 “ limited in Points of Favour, but he may extend
 “ his Mercy and Benefits, beyond what the strict
 “ Words of his Promises may import.”

AND agreeable to this Opinion of Monsieur
Limborch were the Sentiments of his Friend, that
 great Master of Reason, and diligent Searcher into
 Scripture, Mr. *Locke*. To this Question: “ What
 “ shall become of all Mankind, who lived before
 “ our SAVIOUR’S Time; who never heard of his
 “ Name; and consequently could not believe in
 “ him? The Answer (says he) is so obvious and
 “ natural, that one would wonder, how any rea-
 “ sonable Man should think it worth the urging.
 “ No Body was, or can be required to believe,
 “ what was never proposed to him to believe.” †

AND thus have I fairly and candidly delivered
 to you my Thoughts upon this Subject, without
 Disguise or Dissimulation, and I hope, without
 Offence. For as I am conscious to myself, that I
 had no other Motive to treat this nice Doctrine, but
 the Love of Truth and of the Gospel; so the same
 Affection

† *The Reasonableness of Christianity, as delivered in the Scrip-
 tures. Locke’s Works folio Vol. ii. p. 527, 529. &c. Edit. 1727.*

Affection of Mind, and strict Attachment to *the Truth which is in Christ Jesus*, will make me always desirous of Information; and ready to correct any mistaken Notion; I may have formed. It is true, in explaining the various Scriptures, that have fallen under my Consideration in treating this Subject, I have often departed from the beaten Tract of the Commentators. I am sorry for it; and do profess a very high Regard and Veneration for these excellent Persons, who have spent their Time, their Parts, and their Labours, in opening and explaining to us those holy Volumes, which alone *have the Words of eternal Life*. But however I may have varied from them, I hope, I have not departed from sacred Scripture and the Truth. Those are the grand Objects, which I have in View, and to which all other Regards shall for ever give place, and submit. To vindicate God's Ways to Man,—to clear up and explain to human Reason his righteous Methods of Grace and Salvation;—and to reconcile the Gospel to the Dictates of natural Justice and Equity;—was my sole Aim in undertaking this Subject. If I have any way succeeded in so noble an Attempt, it will be a sufficient Recompence, and my Pains are amply rewarded; but if I have not, yet the Consciousness of my Integrity will afford me abundant Comfort and Satisfaction, against any Growlings of Malice, or Flouts of Ignorance, that may be occasioned by it.

HOWEVER, I would not be so far misunderstood, as if I meant to say, that Salvation is a trifling Affair, and easily obtained by any Body. I know, it requires a steady Course of holy Living;—Piety and Obedience to God, Justice and
Charity

Charity to Mankind; and a regular Discharge of
 of our Duty to ourselves and Families; — which,
 in the present corrupt State of human Nature, can-
 not be deemed such a trifling and easy Matter. On
 the contrary, we are exhorted in Scripture, *to work
 out our own Salvation, with Fear and Trembling,*
 Phil. ii. 12. and our State in this Life is expressed,
by running the Race, which is set before us, Heb. xii.
 1. *by fighting the good Fight of Faith,* 1. Tim. vi.
 12. and by many other Contests of Difficulty and
 Danger. And in particular it is often compared
 to a Warfare, which is of all others the most
 hazardous Condition of Life.

NEITHER do I pretend to define, what
 Numbers shall be saved. The holy Scriptures have
 no where done it, that I know of; and I shall not
 interpose my weak Sense and Judgment in Points,
 where they have thought proper to be silent. This
 perhaps is one of those secret Counsels, *which it is
 not for us to know, and which the Father hath put in
 his own Power,* for very obvious Reasons. For
 had the Scriptures said, that many will be saved and
 few damned, it might have tended to make us re-
 miss in our Christian Warfare, and negligent in the
 Way of God's Commandments: Or had God acted
 by these Men's Advice, and declared with Vehe-
 mence and Passion, that the Kingdom of Heaven
 should be shut against all but a few choice Saints, it
 would have been apt to hurry Men into Despair, and
 to have made them give over a Pursuit, of so great
 Difficulty, and so little Chance of Success. My De-
 sign therefore, in this present Discourse, is only to
 explain the Sense of these Scriptures; and to shew,
 that they by no means contain a Denunciation of
 eternal

eternal Perdition against *the most of Mankind*;—but yet without presuming myself to determine, what Proportion will be saved. There is indeed great Room to hope well from that Judge, who is in his Nature infinitely kind and beneficent, *whose tender Mercy is over all his Works*, and *who in Wrath remembreth Mercy*, Habbukuk iii. 2. and we may be assured, that nothing will be determined against us, that is hard or unjust,—nothing but what is exceedingly tender, compassionate, and equitable.

Now unto him, that is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think, according to the Power, that worketh in us,—Unto him be Glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all Ages, World without End, Amen. Ephes. iii. 20, 21.

F I N I S.

